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Secrets Told On Spanish Ears Alone

United Press International

Some of the Nation's military secrets spilled out of the House Armed Services Committee recently. Luckily they fell on ears tuned in only to Spanish.

The near-breath of security came to light yesterday when the committee made public some testimony it took in closed session on March 8. In attendance were Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara and other top Pentagon officials. The transcript had been censored.

After lunch Chairman L. Mendel Rivers (D-S.C.) announced he had been informed that because of a new microphone system in use "everything the Secretary was saying this morning" could be heard in the reception room adjoining the hearing room.

At the time, some visitors were in the reception room, Rivers pointed out gravely. Then, to the relief of his colleagues, he added:

"They happened to be from South America (and) they couldn't speak English."

But, he added, from now on guests will not be allowed in the reception room during secret sessions "because we cannot take any chance of this information leaking out."

A Committee spokesman said yesterday that in addition to keeping visitors away, doors to the hearing room have been sealed so that nary a sound escapes.